



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY AUDITOR DUPAGE COUNTY, ILLINOIS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE DU PAGE COUNTY AUDITOR

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AUDITOR REPORTS COUNTY FINANCES

DuPage County Auditor Jim Rasins has released his report on the County's finances for the most recent fiscal year. The Report noted a \$30.4 million year-end cash balance in the County's main operating fund. This represented a \$1.9 million jump from the prior year. However, Rasins said that this increase should be viewed with caution.

"The cash balance figure represents a snapshot at a given point in time. The \$30.4 million in cash on hand at the end of the fiscal year does not take into account the amount of 2006 carry-over bills that the County paid after the cash basis books closed at the end of the year," he said.

The Auditor noted that the practice of paying current year bills after the end of the County's fiscal year is legal and customary. In fact, following the close of the 2004 and 2005 fiscal years, the County paid out around \$7.3 million for such carry-over bills for each year.

However, he expressed concern that such payments for the most recent year increased by \$1.7 million, over 20% more than the payouts in the two previous fiscal years.

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“If the 2006 carry-over payouts remained at the same level as in 2004 and 2005, instead of \$9.0 million, there would have been an additional \$1.7 million paid prior to the end of the year. This would have resulted in a year-end cash balance much closer to the beginning of the year figure,” Rasins said.

Among the other financial highlights noted in the Auditor’s Report was a 3.4% revenue rise in the main operating fund. This resulted from a combined \$4.6 million jump in amounts received from sales tax and property tax collections.

“The \$61.6 million combined total made sales taxes and property taxes the single largest source of revenue in the Corporate Fund during 2006. Together, they comprised over forty-percent of the Fund’s total revenue,” Rasins noted.

Amounts received from fees and earnings collected in various offices such as the Recorder, Clerk of the Court, Sheriff, and County Clerk provided a total of \$42.0 million to the Corporate Fund. This accounted for 30% of total Fund revenue.

The Fund also benefited from the receipt of the fourth in a series of five annual \$15 million checks from the DuPage Water Commission. The Water Commission amount represents over 10% of the total revenue collected in the Corporate Fund.

The final \$15 million installment will be received in 2007. County leaders are struggling with the prospect of deep budget cuts if a replacement for the Water Commission amount is not found.

The Report disclosed that total 2006 spending from the Corporate Fund budget topped the \$136 million mark. This represented a \$5.0 million jump over the 2005 amount. Auditor Rasins traced the increase to amounts related to personnel and contractual costs.

Employee wages and health insurance costs posted a \$3.7 million boost over the previous year. While increased utility costs played a major role in the \$1.6 million rise in contractual costs incurred.

Three operating offices/departments – Sheriff, Facilities Management, and the Circuit Court Clerk accounted for 41% of the total Corporate Fund spending during the year.

According to the Auditor, in addition to the \$136 million in spending from the 2006 Corporate Fund budget, another \$3.3 million in cash was transferred from the Fund to help finance other County operations. This amount included \$2.7 million given to the Convalescent Center and \$280,000 for the County Historical Museum in Wheaton.

The Auditor noted that the County has expended most of the money that it received several years ago from long-term borrowing arrangements. Bonds were issued in the past to finance construction of County highways, courthouse-related buildings, and stormwater and drainage projects.

The Report also cited a slight revenue decline in three of the County's other operating funds - Local Gasoline Tax, Convalescent Center, and Public Works.

The year-end Financial Report is one of four such Reports issued by the County Auditor throughout the year. The Reports provide a detailed picture of the financial operations of DuPage County government.

Each Report is organized so that taxpayers can more easily monitor the cumulative impact of the \$340 million in annual spending during each fiscal quarter. The year-end Report also includes information regarding significant financial transactions and trends.

Rasins has developed a brief brochure that provides assistance to the public in understanding the nuances of County finances. The brochure and the 120-plus page Quarterly Report can be viewed on the internet at www.dupageco.org/auditor/. The Auditor also welcomes questions about the County's finances.

Copies are also available for inspection at college and public libraries throughout DuPage County and at the Office of the County Auditor in Wheaton.